



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE SUPERVISORY WORK OF PRINCIPALS.

The principal of a high school is the head, or ought to be, of the institution. He is the director of affairs, the chief bearer of responsibility, the "captain of industry," hence, of necessity, his work must be supervisory. If the principal is strong, the school is a power in the community and an absolute necessity; if he is weak, the citizens feel that they ought not to be taxed to support "gilt edged" education. An able, efficient principal is the best argument for secondary education, paid for by the State. He will have a school that may be compared to a silent force of nature, or a healthy organ of the body, performing its functions perfectly without obtruding itself upon the attention.

To secure the best results from supervision, a principal must, first of all, look well to himself. His habits must be exemplary, uniform and regular, his character clear, his health perfect. A dyspeptic is out of place in the school house. One suffering from indigestion is in poor condition to undertake to manage a large number of young people. Personal appearance is no small item in the make-up of a successful supervisor. Choosing the happy mean between the dude and the sloven, he offends not by either extreme. Kindly disposition is another element of success. Dealing with human nature, one disposed to find fault can always be supplied with the raw material, and if it is not to his mind, he can readily work it over into the finished product. On the other hand, if a man is disposed to be an optimist, he can just as readily find much in the "image divine" to admire. A man generally finds that for which he diligently seeks, and quite often he hasn't far to go.

No person unacquainted with the philosophy of education is fitted to do supervisory work. He must have a fair knowledge of the growth and activities of child mind and of the tendencies and limitations of human nature, else he cannot direct the work of instruction. A successful supervising principal must know the secret of success of eminent educators. He must be able to discriminate between the good and the worthless in methods of teaching and in systems of pedagogy. Moreover he must be alive, up with the times, and the possessor of keen powers of observation. The experience of mankind is valuable, civilization

is advancing, the world moves, new and valuable changes are making. What is the relation of these facts to a principal? "Fossil" is not a good name for him to bear. To avoid it he must grow, he must be in touch with these things, he must know what is going on in the educational world. This necessitates his presence at educational conventions, it compels him to read much and think more. He must discriminate as to his reading, he cannot read everything, and his time is—oh, so precious! He should, of course, read professional books, and he finds the periodicals, strong in book reviews and devoted to the discussion of subjects along the lines of his own work, suggestive and helpful.

A principal of a large school should do some teaching, that he may be familiar with the work of instruction. This experience enables him to test the value of his own theories and methods, and prepares him to sympathize with his teachers and to assist them in their work as occasion demands.

Class visitation is an important part of the work of supervision. The atmosphere of a room may be immediately changed by the entrance of the principal. If his bearing is dignified, kindly, quiet; if he presents the attractive, rather than the repellent pole of his magnetic character, the atmosphere he brings with him will harmonize with that already in the room if the teacher is strong and the class, with gladsome interest, are working to the best advantage. If something is wrong, he will feel it, the teacher will feel it, and the class will very soon show that they feel it. The teacher and class will be pleasantly or otherwise affected by the principal's mood and his manner of showing it. If he is irritable, he will see himself reflected on all sides. He should enter the room quietly and pleasantly, with his eyes and ears wide open, never interrupt the work of the class or of the teacher, never lecture, never scold. Happy is that principal who, upon entering a class room, finds all, teacher and class, so interested and absorbed in their work as to scarcely realize his presence. If he should happen to know a little more about the subject under discussion than they appear to know, he should never yield to the temptation of obtruding for the purpose of showing his superior knowledge. The keen sighted teacher will read his face and give him sufficient opportunity to be helpful. If so, he should be brief and to the point. Should he see faults in the

teacher and consequently errors in the instruction, they must be corrected, but not by him in the hearing of the class. Teachers must be sustained. There are teachers and there are recitation hearers, there are real instructors in the school room and there are persons who grind out a weary existence in that sacred place, and who are never properly designated; they should be termed "hangers-on." To promote the work of the one class, and to neutralize the work of the other; to encourage the teacher, and to get rid of the recitation hearer, demand the most exquisite tact on the part of the principal. It is well for the teacher, it is also well for the principal frequently to define the word *tact*, to take due notice thereof, and to govern himself accordingly.

Another thing that demands tact, in the character of the principal, is to criticise in the proper manner, at the right time, and in a suitable place. This requires a due appreciation of the fitness of things. There are two kinds of criticism, commendatory and adverse. The wise principal will make good use of both. He may commend in the presence of the class by emphasizing a good point made by the teacher, or a principle she may have led the class to see and use. Some criticisms are to be made, for the benefit of all the teachers, in a general way, in the faculty meeting. Here the principal will always find a source of power. The full and free discussions, always conducted with tact, always impersonal, will generally prove to be an inspiration to the teachers and of great value in their work. Before criticising adversely, either in faculty meeting or privately, a principal should be sure of his ground. If in faculty meeting, his criticism should come in the form of a question to be discussed; if in private, it should take the form of a suggestion, kindly made, never in a captious spirit. Wasps and dogs are very much out of place in the school house. A suggestion gives a teacher an opportunity of defence, and it may be, of showing the principal that he doesn't know it all. He may have some knowledge of the subject and be master of pedagogic principles, his teacher may be master of both.

The going about from class to class does not comprise all there is of supervisory work in a large high school. Indeed it is a very small part of it. Perhaps the most important feature of such work may be denominated "personal contact," especially with the pupil. In such a school there are all kinds of pupils. Some require admonition, advice, caution, others need words of

encouragement, still others are put upon their mettle by a little inspiration. The school is for the scholar. The principal is, or should be, the leading, moving spirit. In no way can he so well perform his functions as by individual, hand-to-hand, face-to-face contact. Not so much in matters of discipline, but in friendly talks with his boys and girls as to their life work, their hopes, their fears, their anticipations. A kindly interest, manifested by sensible words of encouragement, not only wins a student's esteem, but is often a means of salvation. Many pupils in the high school have vague ideas of their own future; some have never given the subject a thought. Perhaps this is well, and as it should be, while they are in the grammar school, and until they are well along in their high school course; but students must find themselves sometime, so to speak, *i. e.*, discover their "natural bent;" and after their field of vision of a general education has been somewhat broadened, a few timely suggestions and helpful hints would be thankfully received, and might be of inestimable value in their future career. Such questions as: "After graduation—what?" "After college—what?" judiciously put, never do any harm if the student respects the questioner.

The principal can be helpful by enquiring of the students about their current work, their studies, their progress. If there be failures, he should ascertain from them the cause, get at their reasons for "hating" this or that subject, why it is that they like one teacher and dislike another. Such reasons may prove to be revelations to the principal, and, if he is wise, he will still further investigate and make his discoveries useful.

Again, the principal is, or ought to be, the most practical teacher of ethics. Students take things differently from him than from others. He can show them how to avoid storing up future regrets, how to make their fleeting time most valuable, and how to economize energy, how to acquire good rather than bad habits, in short, how best to observe and perform their duties toward themselves. Many men and women look back with inexpressible gratitude to the friend who saved them by helping them to start right; while others, alas, find themselves at the bottom of the ladder of success in life, with no capital with which to rise or begin anew, which is due, largely, to the neglect of duty or to the want of wisdom on the part of the principal. Is it not true that the real remuneration of a faithful supervisor of students' work, is his

feeling of gratification upon being informed of the successes of his former students?

The general business of the school naturally forms a part of the supervisory work of a principal. Some things can be delegated to assistants, but many details demand his personal attention. The comfort and health of teachers and students must be his constant study and care. The temperature, ventilation, and light of the rooms; the work of the janitor, the necessary supplies, provisions for examinations, the proper adjustment of syllabuses, of daily and other programs, the reports to State and local authorities, financial matters and, indeed, everything that requires forethought, or, rather, the foresight and attention of one mind, must be under the careful, watchful, quick eye of the principal. It is said that "the unexpected always happens," but it will not be so to any considerable extent under the supervision of a wide awake principal. He must constantly be on the alert. He never loses sight of the truth of the old saying, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." It is well to have an understood system of fire drill, by which, upon a given signal, the students shall quickly leave the building. Though a fire escape attached to the building be never used, the feeling of safety its existence tends to give is worth incomparably more than its cost. Students occasionally faint or become suddenly ill. It is always wise to be prepared for emergencies, and when matters become somewhat complicated, the principal must be like the efficient general on the battle field, able to take in the situation at a glance and to act coolly, promptly, discreetly.

Parents demand and should receive a large amount of a principal's attention. Cases of discipline are to be settled occasionally; more times, misconduct on the part of pupils may be prevented or avoided by a friendly understanding with fathers or mothers. The principal is expected to advise as to suitable courses of study, parents are desirous of giving their children the best education under the circumstances, but are unable to look ahead and plan without help. Here is a field of work in which the judicious principal can render excellent service, both to his school and to the community. After courses of study have been decided upon and pupils are at work in school, the principal is the proper one to consult as to the character of colleges, requirements for entrance, etc., etc. It is well for students to start right. A mistake

at the beginning of a young person's career may mean an irretrievable injury, if not the ruin of his education.

On the whole, it seems that the supervisory work of a principal of a large high school, if properly and faithfully done, is quite necessary to the success of the institution.

J. G. Allen.

Rochester Free Academy.

THE BINGHAMTON CONFERENCE.

A meeting of principals of secondary schools was held at Binghamton, 24 and 25 February, to confer upon work in English. The purpose was to listen to collegiate complaints, to learn the current methods of the best schools represented at the conference, carefully to examine the submitted specimens of literary expression, and to devise means for remedying apparent defects. Friday evening was given to a round-table consideration of the abnormalities of Freshman English.

Professor J. M. Hart, of the English department of Cornell University: Though I speak primarily for Cornell, I know that this lack of adequate expression is a serious matter for all. Every parent may justly demand that his child, graduating from an academy at the age of eighteen and one-half years, shall possess ability to express his thoughts in words; that these shall be selected with regard to accepted usage, shall be correctly spelled and syntactically arranged into complete sentences; and that these statements shall be properly grouped in a whole-souled paragraph. This is what we require. It has been charged that Cornell asks for the facility of a city reporter; but I protest against such a misconception. Our demands are fair and will sooner or later be met. Every candidate for admission to the University should be able so to express himself that an ordinary reader can take in his thought without effort.

The evil of which we complain is deep and wide-spread. One of our instructors in physics tells me that his Seniors, however precise in experimental work, are apparently unable so to relate processes and conclusions that he can ascertain the meaning. He finds himself compelled to reconstruct the psychology of every